Greetings from Dr. Jacqueline Elliot, President & CEO

I wish you a very happy new year, and I hope 2016 will be a productive, healthy, and very fulfilling year for each of you. The winter break seemed to come and go very quickly and it’s hard to believe that we are now in the last half of the school year, and are headed for spring. Parents are beginning to come into our schools to fill out space requests, and we are preparing for the public lotteries, required by law.

Now with the successful renewal of PUC eCALS and PUC Triumph Charter Academy and PUC Triumph Charter High School behind us, on February 9, we will appear before the LAUSD School Board with our request for the renewal of PUC Excel Charter Academy, and for authorization of a new school for the NE Los Angeles region. The new school, PUC iPREP, will offer a language immersion model for grades K-8, with a choice of Spanish or Mandarin. The school will also offer French in the after school program. This model is extremely powerful in terms of preparing our children to be successful in today’s global society. In addition, it is not a model that our students who live in NE Los Angeles have typically been able to access. The goal is to eventually add grades 9 – 12 to the school, so that our students will be able to graduate from high school highly proficient in multiple languages.

Last but not least, our PUC students continue to amaze us and fill us with pride.

Just prior to winter break, I attended a PUC Triumph Charter High School dance performance. Every 9th grade student participated in the performance, and all of them performed ballet. Their teacher, Ms. Emily Palacios, motivated and inspired them and they were absolutely phenomenal. I have included some pictures below.

The arts are an extremely important part of the education vision in PUC and it is so gratifying to see our students embrace and thrive in all of the genres that our fantastic arts teachers and schools offer to them.
The Mayor of the City of San Fernando Visits Nueva Esperanza

Today, Nueva Esperanza was very excited to host the Mayor of San Fernando, Mr. Joel Fajardo. From his speech, we learned that he was elected to the City Council in 2012 and has served as Mayor since March of 2015. When he was young, he attended local schools in the San Fernando Valley and after graduating with a degree in International Relations from Boston University in 2005, moved back to uplift his community! He is passionate about public service and tackling challenging issues and spoke to our students about civic responsibility, the importance of a college education and pursuing your dreams.

Several students had the opportunity to ask the Mayor about issues concerning them in the community. Questions included youth recreational options, small business diversity, and low income housing. Mayor Fajardo shared insightful explanations surrounding the current city budget, allocation of the budget and upcoming projects for the City of San Fernando. We learned about challenges facing our city’s development and actions we can take in our community to support the changes we want to make. A focus of his presentations surrounded understanding the multifaceted perspectives of the stakeholders in our community and making progress that will grow our city for years to come. He emphasized the importance of long term planning and passionately pursuing meaningful goals.

To close our program, Mrs. Duenas, the Principal of Nueva, presented the mayor with some NECA memorabilia to take home and enjoy. Students were eager to get their notebooks autographed and take selfies to remember the experience. Overall, we were so impressed to have the opportunity to meet a public servant and this was an event we will not soon forget.
“College Talk” at PUC Triumph Charter High School

On Friday, December 18th, TCHS kicked off Winter Break with a special Alumni event. It was TCHS’ first ever “College Talk.” Alumni from the classes of 2014 and 2015 were invited to speak to the current seniors regarding their college experiences. Eleven alumni attending a variety of colleges, including Cal States, UCs and private colleges, took part in the fun and informative event.

Each alumnus participated in one of two panels. During the 1 ½ hour panel discussion, the seniors were invited to ask questions regarding “the college experience”. It was the seniors’ opportunity to get insight directly from those who are living it. The alumni answered questions and shared their experiences regarding all college matters, including academics, dorm life, social life, family relationships and coping with transition (“letting go”). The seniors listened intently and, without a doubt, grew from this experience. It was wonderful to see their wide eyed focus; it was obvious they were listening!

The school leaders and college counselors held a follow-up discussion with the alumni to illicit feedback on what the alumni felt high school did to properly prepare them for college and what high school should have done differently. One of the points highlighted was that the alumni felt that the teachers who prepared them the best for college were the teachers who were the toughest and who they might not have appreciated at the time. It was encouraging to know our students, at least in hindsight, appreciate rigor and high expectations. It reinforced our belief that we are on the right path.

We hope that “College Talk” will be an annual event. As the school gets older, there will be more alumni from which to pull. It will be incredibly valuable to have the insight of upper division college students and to see how it differs from the newbies who visited this year. It is also an excellent opportunity to connect with our alumni and to remind them that our doors are always open as they continue on their college journey.

Scholarships Can Boost College Enrollment And Completion For Low-Income Students

When it comes to financial aid for college there are two basic kinds: Need-based financial aid which is granted based on a family's financial need and merit-based aid which is granted based on academic performance (Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) & Admission test scores: SAT & ACT). The high costs of attending college can make it seem impossible for low-income students to attend college and/or complete their degree once enrolled. Many students are college-ready but do not meet the G.P.A. and college admission test score ranges to be competitive for merit aid. With this being the case scholarships are key to low-income students college access and degree completion success.

In California public universities financial aid can pay for approximately half of the costs of attending a public 4-year university (Source: UC Admissions Webpage). Students looking at private California colleges and universities may access additional institutional funds making both public and private schools a viable option for low-income students, as long as students and family understand they can expect to take on college debt, and this debt is an investment in their student's future career opportunities and earning potential. Students and families are encouraged to explore college and university options that are a good financial fit, and again expect that loans are a part of the equation.

Very few students can expect to attend college debt-free. The old saying there are millions of scholarship dollars that go untapped each year is not true. Scholarships are competitive and students should not count on receiving a large scholarship to pay for college, but scholarships can help alleviate cost barriers making college more affordable.

Scholarships are one FREE type of aid that with a some student dedicated time and follow through can be a key component in alleviating student debt. There are scholarship opportunities available for elementary through post-graduate students (less prevalent for the elementary and middle school students). To ensure PUC Schools' students are aware of scholarships, PUC staff work hard at promoting and educating students and families on scholarship opportunities via monthly newsletter assignments (August – June), Naviance’s online scholarship database is available to high school students, parents and staff. In addition, PUC high schools College Counseling program has built scholarship tasks into 9th-12th grades Naviance programs, requiring students to complete a minimum of ten scholarships over their 4-year high school career. This is accomplished through the collaboration of PUC instructional team members, teachers, administration and college counselors. Students are also encouraged to invest their personal time into registering on scholarship Websites such as www.FastWeb.com, www.GoodCall.com, www.LatinoCollegeDollars.org and www.Scholarships.com (to name a few), which allows students to complete a personal profile, and receive scholarship opportunities aligned to their individual interests and scholarship eligibility.

A SHOUT OUT to Ms. Jill Mayorga, Instructional Coach for promoting and Ms. Tina O'Brien, Science Teacher at PUC Triumph Charter High School for assigning The DuPont Challenge (K-12 Challenge) as a required assignment to her AP Environmental Science and Environmental Science classes. Per Ms. O'Brien the entire challenge is directly aligned with the content they learn; therefore the scholarship opportunity is extra work for the students. The assignment is to be completed outside of the classroom, with regular check-in dates to insure students are meeting the requirements and stay on task. Ms. O'Brien will also dedicate one class period where students will complete the application registration and submission online. Beyond providing students the opportunity to research how the world is trying to mitigate environmental issues and challenges, students will have the opportunity to earn money for college and meet one of the PUC Graduation requirements.

An additional SHOUT OUT to Ms. Stefanie Aguilar, Art Teacher at PUC Triumph Charter High School and Ms. Lauren Walk, College Counselor at PUC Nueva Esperanza Charter Academy High School for embedding the Doodle 4 Google contest into PUC TCHS' Art II and PUC NECA's PCE 1 classes. The contest judges are in the process of reviewing and selecting 53 doodles as the State and Territory Winners. Once chosen, everyone will be invited to help decide who the five National Finalists will be. Voting starts on February 5th, 2016.

Thank you to all PUC staff for your continued work in promote scholarships, and support students with completing competitive applications.

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDERS:

- Students should NEVER pay to participate in a scholarship!
- PUC Schools' Monthly Scholarship Newsletters are posted on the Intranet. Scholarship opportunities are listed by-deadline and include scholarships with deadlines extending into the summer 2016 to help students & staff plan ahead.
- Updated scholarship newsletters are posted to the Intranet the first week of each month.
- If you have a scholarship opportunities you would like added to the PUC-Wide monthly newsletter/ Naviance, please email the opportunities to me. Please email me the scholarship name and details -preferably a Web link - Nicole Murphy, Dir. Of College Access and Financial Aid Strategies: n.murphy@pucschools.org.
Wonder Women Club’s Holiday Toy Drive

By Rachel R Kovach
Inclusion Specialist
PUC Lakeview Charter Academy

This year, PUC Lakeview Charter Academy’s Wonder Women Club kicked off their year with a fantastic community service initiative. A group of 30 young women discussed what service they would like to provide our community this holiday season. In a group vote, these young ladies decided they wanted to host a toy drive with all toys being given to the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles. Thirty 6th, 7th and 8th grade women decorated toy drive boxes and created a jingle that they sang (in groups of three) to each classroom. Over two weeks, the students of PUC Lakeview Charter Academy donated kindly and generously. Over one hundred toys were donated. It filled the trunk and back seat of a 2012 Ford Fusion! The winning classroom, Ms. Sooni Livingston’s 7th Grade Math Class, won a pancake breakfast during the last week of school before the winter break. With the support of PUC’s adult role models, Cassandra Dao, Rachel R Kovach, Sooni Livingston, Gabriela Ramos, Melissa Serio & Brandy Vidales, the Wonder Women kicked off their school year with great service to their community. These young women are already brainstorming on different ideas to promote culture, community and pride this school year. We couldn’t be more proud of these fine young women and for the generosity of PUC Lakeview Charter Academy.
PUC Inspire’s newest student organization is the Mathlete Club. Founded this fall, the club meets weekly with club sponsor Ms. Miranda Ponce. The mixed group of 25 sixth and seventh graders first came together because of their mutual love of math, but they now have bigger ambitions.

The Inspired Mathletes now want to meet two PUC commitments at once by participating in the St. Jude’s Math-a-thon. Student Mathletes take donations for the number of problems completed. Problems are provided by St. Jude’s and meet grade level math standards. Interested in making a donation? Check out the Mathletes’ Math-a-thon page at: [http://fundraising.stjude.org/picapanthers](http://fundraising.stjude.org/picapanthers)

The Mathletes see the St. Jude’s Math-a-thon as just the beginning. Future projects might include field trips to observe engineers, a Math Field Day, and more. Stay tuned for more mathemagic!

PUC Inspire Mathletes: we put the PI in Inspire!
CCECHS hiking club had their first hiking trip of the year on Saturday November 21st to Temescal Canyon Park in Pacific Palisades. This is a very popular hiking destinations in Los Angeles with great views of the Pacific ocean, a seasonal waterfall, and a densely wooden canyon. This 4-mile loop hike with an elevation gain of 1000 feet was great for our first hike of the year as an exercise for those shaky legs. Our students definitely enjoyed the beautiful nature and the camaraderie among each other and the participating teachers. About 40 students attended the hike. Our hiking club is sponsored by Sierra Club and we benefit from two experienced leaders from the club who lead our hikes.

We are looking forward to our next hike on January 30th to Solstice Canyon.

Special thanks to Ms. Luu and Mrs. Simonian (hiking club advisers) and Ms. Neary for participating!
We’re here! Follow the Recruitment Team on social media to stay updated on events, new openings, and much more!

PUC Schools Recruitment  @pucschools_recruitment  @PUC_Recruitment
Discounted Software Available For Home Use

Exclusive for your company, get the completely NEW Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2016 suite for your home. Or if you use a Mac, get Office Home and Business 2016 for Mac for the same low price, $9.95.

The link below provides the details as well as the new program code necessary to purchase Office.

Thank you everyone & happy holidays.

Human Resources Employee Perks Program

Human Resources is pleased to announce a new employee benefit. All employees now have exclusive access to the Working Advantage discount network which allows you to save up to 60% on ticketed events and online shopping. Through Working Advantage you can save on: Movie Tickets, Theme Parks, Ski Tickets, Broadway Shows, Sporting Events, Hotels and Travel, Health and Fitness, Museums and City Passes, Merchant Gift Certificates, Online Shopping... and much more! To subscribe, you may access the Working Advantage website by clicking here: www.workingadvantage.com. When opening an individual account you will need the PUC Schools ID # 413401740.

Working Advantage offers 24-hour online shopping and customer support Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 6:30 PM Eastern time. If you have specific questions regarding the site, please contact Working Advantage at 800-565-3712.

PUC employees will no longer be able to purchase discounted Disneyland Resort tickets from the website link previously featured on the PUC Intranet. However, Working Advantage offers a variety of Disneyland Resort tickets at a discounted price as well. For more information, visit: Working Advantage Disneyland Tickets

Human Resources has AMC tickets available for sale. As of January 1, 2014, AMC will no longer sell Silver Tickets. AMC has decided to move to one ticket going forward which will be the unrestricted Gold Ticket. The Silver tickets that remain in distribution will be honored as stated in the terms and conditions listed on the tickets. The Silver tickets do not expire. Prices are as follows:

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<th>AMC Tickets:</th>
<th>Prices:</th>
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<tr>
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PAYMENT METHOD: ONLY CASHIER'S CHECK, PERSONAL CHECK OR MONEY ORDER. NO CASH!

T-Mobile offers exclusive discounts for PUC Schools Employees. Click on the T-Mobile logo above to visit T-Mobile’s promo website. To enroll by phone, contact Advantage Direct at 866-464-8662 and use promotional code 20356TMOFAV.

Any questions regarding our employee perks program, please contact Isamar Muñoz, HR Assistant, j.munoz@pucschools.org or (818) 559-7699

In appreciation for all credentialed teachers and their hard work, SeaWorld is offering a complimentary Teacher Fun Card.

The SeaWorld Fun Card allows unlimited admission to SeaWorld San Diego for the remainder of 2015. This is an exclusive online offer.

Please visit seaworldparks.com/seaworld-sandiego/teachers?m=1 for more information.
PUC Polo Shirts and Laptop Bags for Sale

You can now purchase PUC Polo Shirts and PUC Laptop bags! Items can be purchased throughout the year. Please contact Jonathan Liu from the Human Resources Department in order to place an order. You can reach him at j.liu@pucschools.org or 818-478-2093.

PUC Polo: $20 for either the male or female cut.

PUC Laptop Bag: $40
Do you know which medical plan you are enrolled in? You now have 24/7 access to all of your PUC Schools benefit information!

You can go directly to our online site using the web address [http://pucschools.charterbenefits.com](http://pucschools.charterbenefits.com). This site supports the following browsers: Microsoft Internet Explorer, version 6.0 and up, Mozilla Firefox version 2.0.0.4 and up, and Safari version 4.0.1 and up. We encourage you to keep your browser updated.

**Usernames and Passwords**

All usernames and passwords have been set to the following:

**Username:** The 1st part of your PUC Schools Email Address (Example: E-mail: a.jones@pucschools.org username: a.jones)

**Password:** Enter the last four digits of your Social Security number or the password you changed it to during your last enrollment.

**For successful navigation of the site, do NOT use the “back” button in your internet browser, as this will automatically log you out of the site. To navigate through the site, use the navigation bar located on the left hand side of the screen.**